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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/558,933	04/26/2000	John F. Acres	4164-125	1655

7590 08/29/2003

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EXAMINER

HARRISON, JESSICA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3714

DATE MAILED: 08/29/2003

4

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/558,933

Applicant(s)

ACRES, JOHN F.

Examiner

Jessica J. Harrison

Art Unit

3714

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 August 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 April 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2,3.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement filed 8/4/2003 fails to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609 because a complete copy of each foreign reference has not been submitted. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered as to the merits. Applicant is advised that the date of any re-submission of any item of information contained in this information disclosure statement or the submission of any missing element(s) will be the date of submission for purposes of determining compliance with the requirements based on the time of filing the statement, including all certification requirements for statements under 37 CFR 1.97(e). See MPEP § 609 ¶ C(1).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 14 – 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

These claims appear with a preamble inconsistent with the preamble of the independent claim from which they depend. Claim 13 defines an apparatus, while claims 14 – 21 attempt to further define a method. It is unclear what is meant.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1,2,4-6, 12-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Heidel (EP 0769769). Heidel discloses a video gaming machine having a touch screen. The game machine includes a card reader (30), a machine communications interface (70), display (12), programmed electronics (inherent), and a video overlay device (56). The game machine is connected to a host computer (68) which includes a database of player account information such as a player name, player id, and player point totals. Figure 3 shows the division of the display screen when accessing the player tracking information from the game machine. In column 6 of the disclosure, Heidel states “In addition, because video display 12 is under the control of a microprocessor, the system has enhanced flexibility. For example, at a touch of a suitable area (not shown) on the screen 23, service request key area 80 can be displayed from which the player can order casino services or request change without interrupting game play.” Clearly, this suggests a video overlay or superimposition of data upon the play screen. Inherently this could include the information/message display are 76 as well.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3, 7-11, 17 and 18 – 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Heidel in view of Fertitta, III et al (Fert).

Heidel indicates that player tracking is included in his system without the need to retrofit the game machines with a “systems box”. He eludes that tracking systems are known, and states generally “the data system tracks total wagering activity for each player so that frequent activity can be rewarded...”. Fert teaches a player tracking system which includes other known tracked data points such as a personal progressive, comp point balances, player ratings (extra credit) and bonus point balances (loyalty). In short, a designer of a system can create as many types of data fields and track activity data with an endless segregation of names and requirements as are deemed necessary to promote play and keep the player at the machine. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize known data tracking fields in the Heidel tracking system, such as those illustrated by Fert, in order to promote play, keep the player at the machine and reward frequent activity. Such is the overall intent of all player-tracking systems.

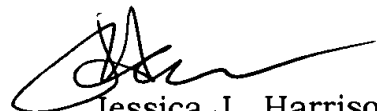
Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Similar player tracking systems are shown.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jessica J. Harrison whose telephone number is 703-308-2217. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 hour/M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Hughes can be reached on 703-308-1806. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0858.


Jessica J. Harrison
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3714

jjh